

Oregon has not been immune to the economic issues facing our nation, but I know that our spirit and our innovative nature will help us through to brighter days. Today, I am pleased to share very promising news with you about one of our state's distinctive trademarks: the [Portland Streetcar](#).

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has just announced that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has approved the Portland Streetcar Loop Project for funding -- one of the final steps in making this project a reality.

Support for this project from the FTA has been a long time coming. In 2003, I wrote the law to create a federal funding program that would help communities develop streetcar projects. Yet the Bush administration refused to implement this legislation, effectively halting any progress on the Portland Streetcar Loop project -- and many others nationwide.

For the last three months, I have persistently remained engaged with the new Obama administration to make certain that they understand the benefits of streetcars for our city and the nation - job creation, community building, and a better climate. Today, I am grateful that these efforts have paid off, not only for Oregon, but for the future of streetcars in communities across the country.

The construction of the Portland Streetcar Loop alone will create an estimated 1,500 jobs in our community over the next two years, and give area residents and visitors transportation options, while reducing our carbon footprint.

Since debuting the first modern streetcar in 2001, the Portland region remains the undisputed leader in the national streetcar renaissance. In fact, Clackamas County's very own Oregon Iron Works will soon be unveiling the first American-built streetcar in 58 years. With 80 cities around the county poised to make their own investments in streetcar projects, the manufacturing potential for streetcars and the economic opportunities for Oregon are tremendous.

I am grateful to all of you for your continued support and will continue to work tirelessly on your behalf in Congress and with the Obama Administration to ensure that our Oregon innovations, such as streetcars play a central role in creating jobs, revitalizing our communities, and in rebuilding and renewing our nation.

Sincerely,



